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THE DESTINY OF * MAN * * * * *

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BY * * * * *

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Philadelphia * * * * *

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THE DESTINY OF MAN.

“ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”—ROMANS viii. 18.

THE DESTINY OF MAN.

THOUGH we have thus a sure and certain hope of progress for the race, still, as far as man is individually concerned, with advancing years we gradually care less and less for many things which gave us the greatest pleasure in youth. On the other hand, if our time has been well used, if we have warmed both hands wisely "before the fire of life," we may gain even more than we lose. If our strength becomes less, we feel also the less necessity for exertion. Hope is gradually replaced by memory: and whether this adds to our happiness or not depends on what our life has been.

There are of course some lives which diminish in value as old age advances, in which one pleasure fades after another, and even those which remain gradually lose their zest; but there are others which gain in richness and peace all, and more, than that of which time robs them.

The pleasures of youth may excel in keenness and in zest, but they have at the best a tinge of anxiety and unrest; they cannot have the fulness and depth which may accompany the consolations

of age, and are amongst the richest rewards of an unselfish life.

For as with the close of the day, so with that of life ; there may be clouds, and yet if the horizon is clear, the evening may be beautiful.

Old age has a rich store of memories. Life is full of

“ Joys too exquisite to last,
And yet more exquisite when past.”

Swedenborg imagines that in heaven the angels are advancing continually to the spring-time of their youth, so that those who have lived longest are really the youngest ; and have we not all had friends who seem to fulfil this idea ? who are in reality—that is in mind—as fresh as a child : of whom it may be said with more truth than of Cleopatra that

“ Age cannot wither nor custom stale
Their infinite variety. ”

“ When I consider old age, ” says Cicero, “ I find four causes why it is thought miserable : one, that it calls us away from the transaction of affairs ; the second, that it renders the body more feeble ; the third, that it deprives us of almost all pleasures ; the fourth, that it is not very far from death. Of these causes let us see, if you please, how great and how reasonable each of them is. ”

To be released from the absorbing affairs of life, to feel that one has earned a claim to leisure and repose, is surely in itself no evil.

To the second complaint against old age, I have already referred in speaking of Health.

The third is that it has no passions. "O noble privilege of age! if indeed it takes from us that which is in youth our greatest defect." But the higher feelings of our nature are not necessarily weakened; or rather, they may become all the brighter, being purified from the grosser elements of our lower nature.

Then, indeed, it might be said that "Man is the sun of the world; more than the real sun. The fire of his wonderful heart is the only light and heat worth gauge or measure."

"Single," says Manu, "is each man born into the world; single he dies; single he receives the rewards of his good deeds; and single the punishment of his sins. When he dies his body lies like a fallen tree upon the earth, but his virtue accompanies his soul. Wherefore let Man harvest and garner virtue, that so he may have an inseparable companion in that gloom which all must pass through, and which it is so hard to traverse."

Is it not extraordinary that many men will deliberately take a road which they know is, to say the least, not that of happiness? That they prefer to make others miserable, rather than themselves happy?

Plato, in the *Phædrus*, explains this by describing Man as a Composite Being, having three natures, and compares him to a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. "Of the two horses one is noble and of noble origin, the other ignoble and of ignoble origin; and the driving, as might be expected, is no easy matter." The noble steed endeavors to raise the chariot, but the ignoble one struggles to drag it down.

"Man," says Shelley, "is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an *Æolian* lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody."

Cicero mentions the approach of death as the fourth drawback of old age. To many minds the shadow of the end is ever present, like the coffin in the Egyptian feast, and overclouds all the sunshine of life. But ought we so to regard death?

Shelley's beautiful lines,

"Life, like a Dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments,"

contain, as it seems to me at least, a double error. Life need not stain the white radiance of eternity; nor does death necessarily trample it to fragments.

Man has, says Coleridge,

“Three treasures,—love and light
And calm thoughts, regular as infants’ breath ;
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,
Himself, his Maker, and the Angel Death.”

Death is “the end of all, the remedy of many, the wish of divers men, deserving better of no men than of those to whom she came before she was called.”

It is often assumed that the journey to

“The undiscovered country from whose bourne
No traveler returns”

must be one of pain and suffering. But this is not so. Death is often peaceful and almost painless.

Bede during his last illness was translating St. John’s Gospel into Anglo-Saxon, and the morning of his death his secretary, observing his weakness, said, “There remains now only one chapter, and it seems difficult to you to speak.” “It is easy,” said Bede; “take your pen and write as fast as you can.” At the close of the chapter the scribe said, “It is finished,” to which he replied, “Thou hast said the truth, *consummatum est*.” He then divided his little property among the brethren, having done which he asked to be placed opposite to the place where he usually prayed, said “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,” and as he pronounced the last words he expired.

Goethe died without any apparent suffering, having just prepared himself to write, and expressed his delight at the return of spring.

We are told of Mozart's death that "the unfinished requiem lay upon the bed, and his last efforts were to imitate some peculiar instrumental effects, as he breathed out his life in the arms of his wife and their friend Süssmaier."

Plato died in the act of writing; Lucan while reciting part of his book on the war of Pharsalus; Blake died singing; Wagner in sleep with his head on his wife's shoulder. Many have passed away in their sleep. Various high medical authorities have expressed their surprise that the dying seldom feel either dismay or regret. And even those who perish by violence, as for instance in battle, feel, it is probable, but little suffering.

But what of the future? There may be said to be now two principal views. There are some who believe indeed in the immortality of the soul, but not of the individual soul: that our life is continued in that of our children would seem indeed to be the natural deduction from the simile of St. Paul, as that of the grain of wheat is carried on in the plant of the following year.

So long indeed as happiness exists it is selfish to dwell too much on our own share in it. Admit that the soul is immortal, but that in the future state of existence there is a break in the continuity of memory, that one does not remember the present life, and from this point of view is not the

importance of identity involved in that of continuous memory? But however this may be according to the general view, the soul, though detached from the body, will retain its conscious identity, and will awake from death, as it does from sleep; so that if we cannot affirm that

“Millions of spiritual creatures walk the Earth,
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep,”

at any rate they exist somewhere else in space, and we are indeed looking at them when we gaze at the stars, though to our eyes they are as yet invisible.

In neither case, however, can death be regarded as an evil. To wish that youth and strength were unaffected by time might be a different matter.

“But if we are not destined to be immortal, yet it is a desirable thing for a man to expire at his fit time. For, as nature prescribes a boundary to all other things, so does she also to life. Now old age is the consummation of life, just as of a play: from the fatigue of which we ought to escape, especially when satiety is super-added.”

From this point of view, then, we need

“Weep not for death,
’Tis but a fever stilled,
A pain suppressed,—a fear at rest,
A solemn hope fulfilled.
The moonshine on the slumbering deep
Is scarcely calmer. Wherefore weep?”

“Weep not for death!

The fount of tears is sealed,
Who knows how bright the inward light
To those closed eyes revealed?
Who knows what holy love may fill
The heart that seems so cold and still.”

Many a weary soul will have recurred with comfort to the thought that

“A few more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come,
And we shall be with those that rest
Asleep within the tomb.

“A few more struggles here,
A few more partings o’er,
A few more toils, a few more tears,
And we shall weep no more.”

By no one has this, however, been more grandly expressed than by Shelley.

“Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep!
He hath awakened from the dream of life.
’Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
He has outsoared the shadows of our night.
Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again.
From the contagion of the world’s slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray, in vain—”

Most men, however, decline to believe that

“We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.”

According to the more general view death frees the soul from the encumbrance of the spirit, and summons us to the seat of judgment. In fact,

“There is no Death ! What seems so is transition ;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.”

We have bodies, “we are spirits.” “I am a soul,” said Epictetus, “dragging about a corpse.” The body is the mere perishable form of the immortal essence. Plato concluded that if the ways of God are to be justified, there must be a future life.

To the aged in either case death is a release. The Bible dwells most forcibly on the blessing of peace. “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” Heaven is described as a place where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

But I suppose every one must have asked himself in what can the pleasures of heaven consist.

“For all we know
Of what the blessed do above
Is that they sing, and that they love.”

It would indeed accord with few men's ideal that there should be any "struggle for existence" in heaven. We should then be little better off than we are now. This world is very beautiful, if we could only enjoy it in peace. And yet mere passive existence—mere vegetation—would in itself offer few attractions. It would indeed be almost intolerable.

Again, the anxiety of change seems inconsistent with perfect happiness; and yet a wearisome, interminable monotony, the same thing over and over again forever and ever without relief or variety, suggests dulness rather than bliss.

I feel that to me, said Greg, "God has promised not the heaven of the ascetic temper, or the dogmatic theologian, or of the subtle mystic, or of the stern martyr ready alike to inflict and bear; but a heaven of purified and permanent affections—of a book of knowledge with eternal leaves, and unbounded capacities to read it—of those we love ever round us, never misconceiving us, or being harassed by us—of glorious work to do, and adequate faculties to do it—a world of solved problems, as well as of realized ideals."

"For still the doubt came back,—Can God provide
For the large heart of man what shall not pall,
Nor through eternal ages' endless tide
On tired spirits fall?"

"These make him say,—If God has so arrayed
A fading world that quickly passes by,
Such rich provision of delight has made
For every human eye,"

What shall the eyes that wait for him survey
When his own presence gloriously appears
In worlds that were not founded for a day,
But for eternal years ? ”

Here science seems to suggest a possible answer : the solution of problems which have puzzled us here ; the acquisition of new ideas ; the unrolling the history of the past ; the world of animals and plants ; the secrets of space ; the wonders of the stars and of the regions beyond the stars. To become acquainted with all the beautiful and interesting spots of our own world would indeed be something to look forward to, and our world is but one of many millions. I sometimes wonder as I look away to the stars at night whether it will ever be my privilege as a disembodied spirit to visit and explore them. When we had made the great tour fresh interests would have arisen, and we might well begin again.

Here there is an infinity of interest without anxiety. So that at last the only doubt may be

“ Lest an eternity should not suffice
To take the measure and the breadth and height
Of what there is reserved in Paradise
Its ever-new delight.”

Cicero surely did not exaggerate when he said, “ O glorious day ! when I shall depart to that divine company and assemblage of spirits, and quit

this troubled and polluted scene. For I shall go not only to those great men of whom I have spoken before, but also to my son Cato, than whom never was better man born, nor more distinguished for pious affection; whose body was burned by me, whereas, on the contrary, it was fitting that mine should be burned by him. But his soul not deserting me, but oft looking back, no doubt departed to these regions whither it saw that I myself was destined to come. Which, though a distress to me, I seemed patiently to endure: not that I bore it with indifference, but I comforted myself with the recollection that the separation and distance between us would not continue long. For these reasons, O Scipio (since you said that you with Lælius were accustomed to wonder at this), old age is tolerable to me, and not only not irksome, but even delightful. And if I am wrong in this, that I believe the souls of men to be immortal, I willingly delude myself: nor do I desire that this mistake, in which I take pleasure, should be wrested from me as long as I live; but if I, when dead, shall have no consciousness, as some narrow-minded philosophers imagine, I do not fear lest dead philosophers should ridicule this my delusion."

Nor can I omit the striking passage in the *Apology*, when pleading before the people of Athens, Socrates says, "Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter

unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by the sight of dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now, if death is like this, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead are, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this?

“If, indeed, when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges, who are said to give judgment there,—Minos, and Rhadamanthus, and Æacus, and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life,—that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus, and Musæus, and Hesiod, and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful

interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old, who have suffered death through an unjust judgment ; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge ; as in this world, so also in that ; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition ; or Odysseus or Sisyphus, or numberless others, men and women too ! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions. In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions ; assuredly not. For besides being happier in that world than in this, they will be immortal, if what is said be true.

“Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods ; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that to die and be released was better for me ; and therefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers ; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good ; and for this I may gently blame them. The hour of departure has

arrived, and we go our ways—I to die and you to live. Which is better God only knows. ”

In the *Wisdom of Solomon* we are promised that—

“ The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.

“ In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die ; and their departure is taken for misery.

“ And their going from us to be utter destruction ; but they are in peace.

“ For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality.

“ And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded : for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself.”

And assuredly, if in the hour of death the conscience is at peace, the mind need not be troubled. The future is full of doubt, indeed, but fuller still of hope.

If we are entering upon a rest after the struggles of life,

“ Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest, ”

that to many a weary soul will be a welcome bourne, and even then we may say,

“ O Death ! where is thy sting ?
O Grave ! where is thy victory ? ”

On the other hand, if we are entering on a new

sphere of existence, where we may look forward to meet not only those of whom we have heard so often, those whose works we have read and admired, and to whom we owe so much, but those also whom we have loved and lost ; when we shall leave behind us the bonds of the flesh and the limitations of our earthly existence ; when we shall join the Angels, and Archangels, and all the company of Heaven,—then, indeed, we may cherish a sure and certain hope that the interests and pleasures of this world are as nothing compared to those of the life that awaits us in our Eternal Home.

THE HOPE OF PROGRESS.

"To what then may we not look forward, when a spirit of scientific inquiry shall have spread through those vast regions in which the progress of civilization, its sure precursor, is actually commenced and in active progress? And what may we not expect from the exertions of powerful minds called into action under circumstances totally different from any which have yet existed in the world, and over an extent of territory far surpassing that which has hitherto produced the whole harvest of human intellect."

HERSCHEL.

THE HOPE OF PROGRESS.

THERE are two lines, if not more, in which we may look forward with hope to progress in the future. In the first place, increased knowledge of nature, of the properties of matter, and of the phenomena which surround us, may afford to our children advantages far greater even than those which we ourselves enjoy. Secondly, the extension and improvement of education, the increasing influence of Science and Art, of Poetry and Music, of Literature and Religion,—of all the powers which are tending to good, will, we may reasonably hope, raise man and make him more master of himself, more able to appreciate and enjoy his advantages, and to realize the truth of the Italian proverb, that wherever light is, there is joy.

One consideration which has greatly tended to retard progress has been the floating idea that there was some sort of ingratitude, and even impiety, in attempting to improve on what Divine Providence had arranged for us. Thus Prometheus was said to have incurred the wrath of Jove for bestowing on mortals the use of fire; and other improvements

only escaped similar punishment when the ingenuity of priests attributed them to the special favor of some particular deity. This feeling has not even yet quite died out. Even I can remember the time when many excellent persons had a scruple or prejudice against the use of chloroform, because they fancied that pain was ordained under certain circumstances.

We are told that in early Saxon days Edwin, King of Northumbria, called his nobles and his priests around him, to discuss whether a certain missionary should be heard or not. The king was doubtful. At last there rose an old chief, and said:—"You know, O King, how, on a winter evening, when you are sitting at supper in your hall, with your company around you, when the night is dark and dreary, when the rain and the snow rage outside, when the hall inside is lighted and warm with a blazing fire, sometimes it happens that a sparrow flies into the bright hall out of the dark night, flies through the hall and then flies out at the other end into the dark night again. We see him for a few moments, but we know not whence he came nor whither he goes in the blackness of the storm outside. So is the life of man. It appears for a short space in the warmth and brightness of this life, but what came before this life, or what is to follow this life, we know not. If, therefore, these new teachers can enlighten us as to the darkness that went before, and the dark-

ness that is to come after, let us hear what they have to teach us."

It is often said, however, that great and unexpected as recent discoveries have been, there are certain ultimate problems which must ever remain unsolved. For my part, I would prefer to abstain from laying down any such limitations. When Park asked the Arabs what became of the sun at night, and whether the sun was always the same, or new each day, they replied that such a question was foolish, being entirely beyond the reach of human investigation.

M. Comte, in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, as recently as 1842, laid it down as an axiom regarding the heavenly bodies, "We may hope to determine their forms, distances, magnitude, and movements, but we shall never by any means be able to study their chemical composition or mineralogical structure." Yet within a few years this supposed impossibility has been actually accomplished, showing how unsafe it is to limit the possibilities of science.

It is, indeed, as true now as in the time of Newton, that the great ocean of truth lies undiscovered before us. I often wish that some President of the Royal Society, or of the British Association, would take for the theme of his annual address "The things we do not know." Who can say on the verge of what discoveries we are perhaps even now standing! It is extraordinary how slight a margin

may stand for years between Man and some important improvement. Take the case of the electric light, for instance. It had been known for years that if a carbon rod be placed in an exhausted glass receiver, and a current of electricity be passed through it the carbon glowed with an intense light, but on the other hand it became so hot that the glass burst. The light, therefore, was useless, because the lamp burst as soon as it was lighted. Edison hit on the idea that if you made the carbon filament fine enough, you would get rid of the heat and yet have abundance of light. Edison's right to his patent has been contested on this very ground. It has been said that the mere introduction of so small a difference as the replacement of a thin rod by a fine filament was so slight an item that it could not be patented. The improvements by Swan, Lane Fox, and others, though so important as a whole, have been made step by step.

Or take again the discovery of anæsthetics. At the beginning of the century Sir Humphrey discovered laughing gas, as it was then called. He found that it produced complete insensibility to pain and yet did not injure health. A tooth was actually taken out under its influence, and of course without suffering. These facts were known to our chemists, they were explained to the students in our great hospitals, and yet for half a century the obvious application occurred to no one. Operations continued to be performed as before,

patients suffered the same horrible tortures, and yet the beneficent element was in our hands, its divine properties were known, but it never occurred to any one to make use of it.

I may give one more illustration. Printing is generally said to have been discovered in the fifteenth century; and so it was for all practical purposes. But in fact printing was known long before. The Romans used stamps; on the monuments of Assyrian kings the name of the reigning monarch may be found duly printed. What then is the difference? One little, but all-important step. The real inventor of printing was the man into whose mind flashed the fruitful idea of having separate stamps for each letter, instead of for separate words. How slight seems the difference, and yet for 3000 years the thought occurred to no one. Who can tell what other discoveries, as simple and yet as far-reaching, lie at this very moment under our very eyes!

Archimedes said that if you would give him room to stand on, he would move the earth. One truth leads to another; each discovery renders possible another, and, what is more, a higher.

We are but beginning to realize the marvelous range and complexity of Nature. I have elsewhere called attention to this with special reference to the problematical organs of sense possessed by many animals.

There is every reason to hope that future studies

will throw much light on these interesting structures. We may, no doubt, expect much from the improvement in our microscopes, the use of new re-agents, and of mechanical appliances; but the ultimate atoms of which matter is composed are so infinitesimally minute, that it is difficult to foresee any manner in which we may hope for a final solution of these problems.

Loschmidt, who has since been confirmed by Stoney and Sir W. Thomson, calculates that each of the ultimate atoms of matter is at most $\frac{1}{50000000}$ of an inch in diameter. Under these circumstances we cannot, it would seem, hope at present for any great increase of our knowledge of atoms by improvements in the microscope. With our present instruments we can perceive lines ruled on glass which are $\frac{1}{90000}$ of an inch apart; but owing to the properties of light itself, it would appear that we cannot hope to be able to perceive objects which are much less than $\frac{1}{100000}$ of an inch in diameter. Our microscopes may, no doubt, be improved, but the limitation lies not in the imperfection of our optical appliances, but in the nature of light itself.

It has been calculated that a particle of albumen $\frac{1}{80000}$ of an inch in diameter contains no less than 125,000,000 of molecules. In a simpler compound the number would be much greater; in water, for instance, no less than 8,000,000,000. Even then, if we could construct microscopes far more powerful than any which we now possess,

they could not enable us to obtain by direct vision any idea of the ultimate organization of matter. The smallest sphere of organic matter which could be clearly defined with our most powerful microscopes may be, in reality, very complex; may be built up of many millions of molecules, and it follows that there may be an almost infinite number of structural characters in organic tissues which we can at present foresee no mode of examining.

Again, it has been shown that animals hear sounds which are beyond the range of our hearing, and I have proved they can perceive the ultra-violet rays, which are invisible to our eyes.

Now, as every ray of homogeneous light which we can perceive at all, appears to us as a distinct color, it becomes probable that these ultra-violet rays must make themselves apparent to animals as a distinct and separate color (of which we can form no idea), but as different from the rest as red is from yellow, or green from violet. The question also arises whether white light to these creatures would differ from our white light in containing this additional color.

These considerations cannot but raise the reflection how different the world may—I was going to say must—appear to other animals from what it does to us. Sound is the sensation produced on us when the vibrations of the air strike on the

drum of our ear. When they are few, the sound is deep ; as they increase in number, it becomes shriller and shriller ; but when they reach 40,000 in a second, they cease to be audible. Light is the effect produced on us when waves of light strike on the eye. When 400 millions of millions of vibrations of ether strike the retina in a second, they produce red, and as the number increases the color passes into orange, then yellow, green, blue, and violet. But between 40,000 vibrations in a second and 400 millions of millions we have no organ of sense capable of receiving the impression. Yet between these limits any number of sensations may exist. We have five senses, and sometimes fancy that no others are possible. But it is obvious that we cannot measure the infinite by our own narrow limitations.

Moreover, looking at the question from the other side, we find in animals complex organs of sense, richly supplied with nerves, but the function of which we are as yet powerless to explain. There may be fifty other senses as different from ours as sound is from sight ; and even within the boundaries of our own senses there may be endless sounds which we cannot hear, and colors, as different as red from green, of which we have no conception. These and a thousand other questions remain for solution. The familiar world which surrounds us may be a totally different place to other animals. To them it may be full of music which we cannot hear, of color which we cannot

see, of sensations which we cannot conceive. To place stuffed birds and beasts in glass cases, to arrange insects in cabinets, and dried plants in drawers, is merely the drudgery and preliminary of study; to watch their habits, to understand their relations to one another, to study their instincts and intelligence, to ascertain their adaptations and their relations to the forces of Nature, to realize what the world appears to them; these constitute, as it seems to me at least, the true interest of natural history, and may even give us the clue to senses and perceptions of which at present we have no conception.

From this point of view the possibilities of progress seem to me to be almost unlimited.

So far again as the actual condition of man is concerned, the fact that there has been some advance cannot, I think, be questioned.

In the Middle Ages, for instance, culture and refinement scarcely existed beyond the limits of courts, and by no means always there. The life in English, French, and German castles was rough and almost barbarous. Mr. Galton has expressed the opinion, which I am not prepared to question, that the population of Athens, taken as a whole, was as superior to us as we are to Australian savages. But even if that be so, our civilization, such as it is, is more diffused, so that unquestionably the general European level is much higher.

Much, no doubt, is owing to the greater facility

of access to the literature of our country, to that literature, in the words of Macaulay, "the brightest, the purest, the most durable of all the glories of our country; to that Literature, so rich in precious truth and precious fiction; to that Literature which boasts of the prince of all poets, and of the prince of all philosophers; to that Literature which has exercised an influence wider than that of our commerce, and mightier than that of our arms."

Few of us make the most of our minds. The body ceases to grow in a few years; but the mind, if we will let it, may grow as long as life lasts.

The onward progress of the future will not, we may be sure, be confined to mere material discoveries. We feel that we are on the road to higher mental powers; that problems which now seem to us beyond the range of human thought will receive their solution, and open the way to still further advance. Progress, moreover, we may hope, will be not merely material, not merely mental, but moral also.

It is natural that we should feel a pride in the beauty of England, in the size of our cities, the magnitude of our commerce, the wealth of our country, the vastness of our Empire. But the true glory of a nation does not consist in the extent of its dominion, in the fertility of the soil, or the beauty of Nature, but rather in the moral and intellectual pre-eminence of the people.

And yet how few of us, rich or poor, have made ourselves all we might be. If he does his best, as

Shakespeare says, "What a piece of work is man ! How noble in reason ! How infinite in faculty ! in form and movement, how express and admirable !" Few indeed, as yet, can be said to reach this high ideal.

The Hindoos have a theory that after death animals live again in a different form ; those that have done well in a higher, those that have done ill in a lower grade. To realize this is, they find, a powerful incentive to a virtuous life. But whether it be true of a future life or not, it is certainly true of our present existence. If we do our best for a day, the next morning we shall rise to a higher life ; while if we give way to our passions and temptations, we take with equal certainty a step downward toward a lower nature.

It is an interesting illustration of the Unity of Man, and an encouragement to those of us who have no claims to genius, that, though of course there have been exceptions, still on the whole, periods of progress have generally been those when a nation has worked and felt together ; the advance has been due not entirely to the efforts of a few great men, but also of a thousand little men ; not to a single genius, but to a national effort.

Think, indeed, what might be.

" Ah ! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year."

Our life is surrounded with mystery, our very world is a speck in boundless space ; and not only the period of our own individual life, but that of the whole human race is, as it were, but a moment in the eternity of time. We cannot imagine any origin, nor foresee the conclusion.

But though we may not as yet perceive any line of research which can give us a clue to the solution, in another sense we may hold that every addition to our knowledge is one small step toward the great revelation.

Progress may be more slow, or more rapid. It may come to others and not to us. It will not come to us if we do not strive to deserve it. But come it surely will.

“ Yet one thing is there that ye shall not slay,
Even thought, that fire nor iron can affright.”

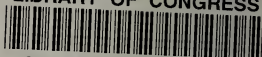
The future of man is full of hope, and who can foresee the limits of his destiny?





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